

India

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Sowing Prayers in America; Reaping Souls in India

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RAJAHMUNDY, INDIA



"THE FIELD IS THE WORLD"

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Pastor Rudolph Arps, Rajahmundry, India



WEARY and disappointed after five days of daily preaching in India, to two or three crowds successively, we were returning home.

Everywhere there was either indifference or open opposition on the part of the people we were longing to reach with the Gospel of the only Saviour of men.

Said some of them when we plead with them to receive our Christ, "No. See, our color, our language, our customs are different from yours. Therefore our religion must be different." Others answered, "We pluck the flowers that we will, at our pleasure, so also we can accept whatever religion we like."

It seemed altogether useless to make any further efforts to break down the wall of their indifference and opposition.

However, we had no thought of giving up, so the following morning we started out again. An unusually large crowd gathered to hear us. We sang a hymn and then preached Christ crucified.

To our great joy, the audience listened with attention and eagerness. Thankfully I walked home with my good evangelist, faithful old Jeremiah.



"Sir," he said, "I know why you had such a good hearing today."

"Why was it?" I asked.

"On the other side of the ocean," answered this faithful servant of God, "they must have been praying for you just then."

Was he right? Certainly the power of God was with the preaching of the Word that day. On our arrival at home a little lad of perhaps eleven or twelve years of age—no Hindu knows his age whether old or young—approached me saluting very sweetly.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Sir," came the answer, "my name is Ella Sooraya. I want to become a Christian because what you said about Jesus Christ to-day is all right." I was astonished, but my heart was full of grateful thanksgiving.

After some further conversation he asked me to write to the Christian headmaster of our mission school to admit him as a pupil, so that he might learn all about Jesus. I gave him the letter and my blessing.

After a fortnight the teacher reported that Sooraya was one of his best pupils, in fact a boy of rare qualifications.

At that time we had to make a tour of several months to visit more than a hundred different villages, involving a long absence from headquarters.

About three weeks after our departure, I received a letter from the headmaster saying that Sooraya had suddenly fallen ill and died. We were in deep sorrow, but we learned with joy that he had died with a prayer on his lips.

After our touring had been finished, we were taken by a great surprise, one day, for there, on the verandah of the mission house, stood the parents and sister of Sooraya, all heathen.

I did not know who they were until the father told me.

When I then inquired after his desire, he continued to say, after some hesitation, while his wife and daughter stood aside weeping: "Sir, where our son Sooraya has gone, we wish to go. He has never said a lie, and when he was dying, he assured us that he was going to the only true God and begged that we should give him the promise to go to you on your return and be baptized by you, so that we were sure to follow him into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ."

After two months of instruction and regular attendance upon our Sunday services, all three were received into the Church by Holy Baptism. Was our good evangelist Jeremiah, right?

"In foreign lands they wondered how
Their word that day had power,
At home the workers—two or three—
Had met to pray an hour."

If this is true is it not true also that the words of the missionaries may lack power when the workers at home forget to pray?